

DANIEL F. WATERS GERMANTOWN DYE WORKS,  
BUILDING E  
37-55 East Wister Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-213-E

HAER  
PA  
51-PHILA  
716E-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
National Park Service  
Northeast Region  
Philadelphia Support Office  
U.S. Custom House  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HAER  
PA  
91-PHILA  
716E-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DANIEL F. WATERS GERMANTOWN DYE WORKS, BUILDING E

HAER No. PA-213-E

Location:

37-55 E. Wister Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

Present Owner:

Greater Germantown Housing Development Corporation  
48 East Penn Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19144

Present Occupant:

Vacant.

Significance:

Building E is the last building William Mills erected. Along with Buildings C and D, Building E forms a nucleus of older industrial buildings associated with William Mills.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History

#### Date(s) of Erection:

Building E was built between 1881 and 1885 (Hexamer 1890).

#### Architect:

Unknown.

#### Original/Subsequent Owners:

See Chain of Title.

#### Builder, Contractor, Suppliers:

Unknown.

#### Original Plans/Construction:

Building E is a linear, one-story brick structure with a timber truss system. Building E is almost entirely surrounded by later buildings, therefore a majority of its facades are not visible.

#### Alterations/Additions:

Since Building E was, most likely, a dye house, the question of its original interior features being retained is subject to scrutiny. See this section in Building C.

### B. Historical Context

Building E was the last major building built by the Millses at the Germantown Dye Works. The structure was, ostensibly, squeezed onto the property on a strip of land behind Building C. Its features have been obscured by new construction on all sides, however its design certainly was in keeping with the rest of the complex: horizontal, brick, polygonal, gabled, with sound, simple components.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

#### Architectural Character:

Exterior has been obscured by later construction.

#### Condition of Fabric:

Building E is in poor condition.

### B. Description of Exterior

#### Overall Dimensions:

25' x 120', 1-story.

#### Foundations:

Masonry.

#### Walls:

Brick, common bond. Southern wall has a large cinderblock alteration.

#### Structural System/Framing:

Load bearing brick masonry walls with wooden framing members with an extensive wooden truss system spanning the width of the building and supporting a gable roof.

#### Porches/Stoops/Balconies/Bulkheads:

None.

#### Chimneys:

Present conditions not available. A c.1920 rendering depicts chimneys jutting from Building E, however the rendering erroneously depicts other sections of the Germantown Dye Works and cannot be considered a fully reliable resource.

#### Openings:

##### Doorways/Doors:

There are interior access openings between Building E and C, as well as Building B, Hinckley Knitting Mills. At the south end of Building E, there is a sliding garage door which opens onto an enclosed courtyard.

Windows/Shutters:

None. All elevations obscured by later construction.

Roof:

Gabled roof with built-up asphalt roofing, and monitor.

C. Description of Interior

Floor Plans:

Open rectangular space with columns.

Stairways:

Not applicable.

Flooring:

Original 2" wooden planks have been replaced by concrete. Concrete has depressions for dye vats.

Wall/Ceiling Finishes:

Exposed truss work at ceiling with the two northern roof trusses failing. Walls are of plaster.

Openings:

Doorways/Doors:

Building E connects internally with Buildings C, F, and G. Between E and C is a rolling metal fire door.

Windows:

Not applicable, all openings blocked.

Decorative Features and Trim:

Not applicable.

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Hardware:

No historic hardware in Building E.

Mechanical Equipment:

Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:

Overhead duct work with forced air heat.

Lighting:

No historic lighting fixtures. Remnants of electrical system that was probably connected to dye vats.

Plumbing:

Modern metal piping throughout. Remnants of plumbing system that was probably connected to dye vats.

**D. Site**

General Setting/Orientation:

Building E is almost entirely surrounded: It shares its north wall with Building F, its east wall with Buildings C and G, its south wall with Building R, and its west wall with Building B of the Hinckley Knitting Mills.

Historic Landscape Design:

None

Outbuildings:

None.